



BALCARRAS
From strength to strength

NEWSLETTER

Welcome from the Headteacher

Dear Parents,

Welcome to the latest newsletter from Balcarras. Bob Dylan wrote: "Time is a jet plane, it moves too fast." He was right. Another school year just seems to be whizzing by. So much has been going on this term and we still have much to look forward to. Next week is our Annual Carol Concert at Holy Apostles church and I would encourage you to come along. You don't need a ticket and there is no charge, although there is a retiring collection for the Cheltenham Open Door Charity.

The week after we have the whole school production of City of Angels. Tickets are selling as if they were hot cakes, so please do get yours fast. Details below.

In the week beginning Monday 9th December we have the Christmas Dinner days. We will try to accommodate everyone but it is important that pupils are booked up by the deadline which is Thursday 5th December.

Keep up to date on all our news:

WWW.BALCARRAS.GLOUCS.SCH.UK

WHOLE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

DOMINIC BURKE, HEADTEACHER

Our whole school attendance figure is up on last year, which I am pleased about. However I still think our overall absence rate of 4% is too high. We are operating well above national averages but I want us to get back to getting attendance above 97% as it was before the pandemic. Your support with this is much appreciated.

SCHOOL ADMISSIONS CONSULTATION

DOMINIC BURKE, HEADTEACHER

Balcarras School last consulted on its' admissions policy in November 2018. Admissions authorities are required to consult at least every 7 years.

The Balcarras Trust (which is the admissions authority) in conjunction with the Local Governing Board of Balcarras will launch a six week consultation beginning on 7th November and closing on 19th December. This consultation is with regard to the admissions policy of the school for 2026-27. The final policy will be published in January 2025 after the completion of the consultation.

All the information can be found on the school website by clicking [here](#).

GIFT AID SCHEME

DOMINIC BURKE HEADTEACHER

I would like to draw your attention to our gift aid scheme. It has been running for many years and pays for the school minibuses as well as providing funds for 'nice to have' projects around the school.

The next two years are forecast to be as challenging as we have ever faced financially so if you can help then please do. No donation is too small and I can promise you that we will put every penny to good use. Please click [here](#) for further information.

ACTIVITIES WEEK 2025

LYN MASSEY, ACTIVITIES WEEK CO-ORDINATOR

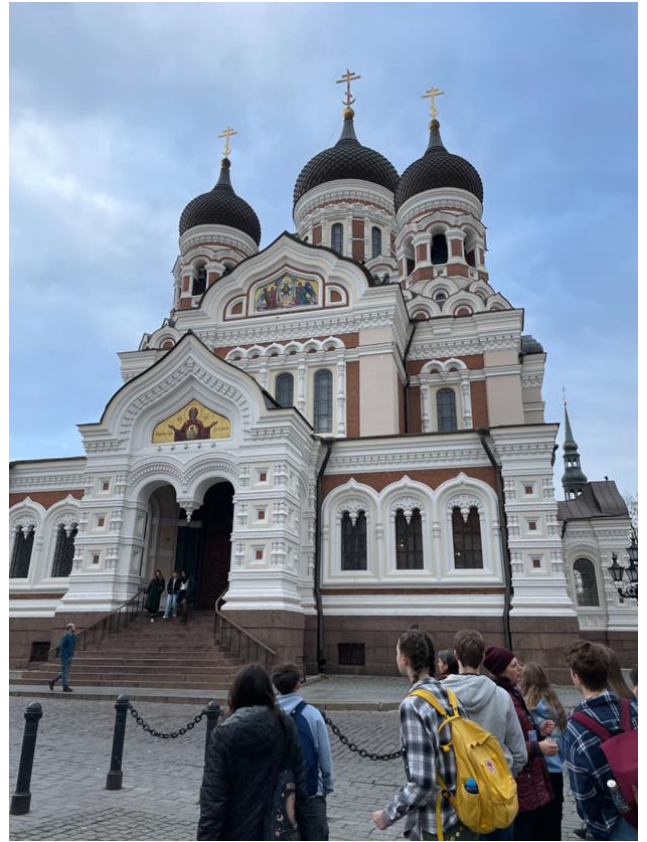
Tickets are now available for the two shows in London. Lion King the musical on Wednesday 9th July and Starlight Express at Wembley Stadium on Thursday 10th July 2025. The cost of these tickets are £48 each and available to purchase on Scopay. This includes coach travel to London, shopping at Westfields, and matinee performance at the theatres. Returning back to school around 8pm.

SIXTH FORM OPEN EVENING – 2025 ADMISSIONS

Please join us for our open evening on Thursday 16th January 2025 from 6-8pm. There is no need to book a place, further information about the evening will be on our [website](#) nearer the time. We welcome all families with students currently in Y11, both currently at Balcarras and other schools. If you have any questions or are unable to attend the evening, please contact cc@balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk

ESTONIA TRIP

ALI BIRD, MFL TEACHER



38 pupils studying Russian started half term with a fantastic trip to Estonia. It was a lovely surprise to discover that our pilot for the flight from Luton to Tallinn was a Balcarras alumni, Harry Davis, and he even arranged for us to have a group photo in front of the plane before take-off! We had four busy days in Tallinn and highlights included a tour of the old town and Kadriorg palace and visits to the KGB museum and Proto invention museum. Students had Russian language classes and also practised the language when souvenir shopping and ordering food. On the last night the group had a real taste of Russian cuisine with a cookery class at a local restaurant. The borsch, pelmeni and pancakes were a real hit! The pupils from Year 9 -13 were a real credit to the school and made the most of the opportunity to discover the language, culture and history of the region.

**CHRISTMAS LUNCHES
MAIN SCHOOL & SIXTH FORM**



Christmas Dinner

*Tuesday 10th December
(years 7&8-1)*

*Wednesday 11th December
(years 8-2 & 9)*

*Thursday 12th December
(years 10, 11, 12 & 13)*

Menu

Roast Turkey

Roasted Vegetable & Feta Cheese Tart
(vegan option available on request)

Roast Potatoes, Stuffing, Pigs in Blankets,
Brussels, Carrots & Peas

Christmas Pudding, Mince Pie or Ice Cream

The Cost will be £3.75 per person. Please pay online via Scopay no cash will be taken for payment, Online payment will close on Thursday 5th December



6th FORM CHRISTMAS BUFFET

*December
Friday 13th
@ 1.20pm*

*Tickets £3.75
NOW ON SALE on Scopay
Deadline for payment 5th Dec*



CLIMATE CHANGE DEBATE AMELIE ROWE 901

Members of the Balcarras Eco club took part in a Climate debate with other Cheltenham schools at the Council Chambers in Cheltenham. The day began with a short recap and agreement of the day's agenda, and afterwards an opening speech to begin the conference from Azerbaijan, the host country of COP29. All of the countries/schools gave their opening statements on how they were affected by climate change and their goals for sustainability.

Balcarras represented the USA and consisted of Amelie R, Amy P, Bluebelle L, Delilah H, Matthew J and Thalia O-J. We found that the first part of the day, the mock conference and debate, the most fun. After lunch, we had a look at a marketplace of local charities and organisations that work in sustainability, representing everything from local park, Cheltenham's Clean Air plan, the councils 'Net zero' targets, through to wildlife and re-wilding projects. The final event of the day was a "Q and A" session with a panel of visitors who work in sustainability, it gave us the chance to see the careers that people have in this field and some of the latest projects they were working on.

PTFA UPCOMING EVENTS



Tickets are on sale already for the next PTFA Comedy Night on Friday 7th March. Please click [here](#) to buy tickets. It's a great evening of entertainment with a very competitively priced bar with all funds raised going directly to the school.

CAROL SERVICE - WED 4TH DEC 2024

The annual Carol Service will be taking place at Holy Apostles Church on Wednesday 4th December at 7pm. There will be a retiring collection in aid of Cheltenham Open Door.

You are invited to mince pies (made by the school staff) in the church hall afterwards which will be served by the PTFA.

SCHOOL PRODUCTION

The PTFA will also be providing very competitively priced interval drinks during the school production running from Tuesday 10th December to Friday 13th December.

If you would like to get involved with the PTFA, the next meeting will be on Wednesday 15th January at 7pm in the staff room, new members are always welcome. Please do come along.

SENIOR MATHS CHALLENGE – NOV 24

SIMON CRITCHLEY, HEAD OF MATHS

This year 135 students from Y12 and Y13 took part in the UKMT Senior Maths Challenge. 80 students received an award and joined the maths staff in the library at lunchtime for the certificates and refreshments.

The overall winner was Y11 pupil, Sebastian Hunter, who added the top maths prize in school to his Intermediate Maths challenge prize from last year. Seb beat all the best mathematicians from Y12 and Y13 and has qualified for the Maths Olympiad later on in the month.



EASYFUNDRAISING

Balcarras School



Just letting you know that Balcarras School are now registered with easyfundraising, which means you can raise FREE donations for us every time you shop online. Over 7,000 brands will donate to us when you use easyfundraising to shop with them – at no extra cost to yourself! These donations really mount up and make a BIG difference to us, so we'd really appreciate it if you could take a moment to sign up and support us. It's completely FREE and only takes a moment. You can find our easyfundraising by clicking [here](#).

Thank you so much!

NEWSLETTER



The newsletter will now be distributed by email and available to view on our VLE (Firefly) as well as on the school website.

It is incredibly easy and will save the school a lot of paper and the planet a lot of trees!

If you would still prefer a hard copy, please contact Karen Adkins
ksa@balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk

Follow us on X (formerly Twitter) @balcarras and Facebook, Facebook.com/BalcarrasSchool for updates and news about school life and events.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dominic Burke', with a horizontal line underneath.

Headteacher



VACANCIES

All vacancies are advertised on the Balcarras Trust website:
<https://www.thebalcarrastrust.co.uk>

COMMUNITY NOTICES

Photography Competition

Waters of the Cotswolds



SUBMISSION: Chose up to 2 themes : Submit 1 photo per theme

- THEMES:**
- Wildlife
 - Reflections
 - Troubled Waters
 - Portraits by the River
 - Historical Perspectives

Free to Enter

PRIZES: Prizes for winners and runners-up

- CATEGORIES:**
- Under 11's
 - 11-16 year-olds
 - Open (16+)

DEADLINE: Sunday 5th January 2025

CONTACT: Evenlode@cotswolds-nl.org.uk

